

LESSON 2: SUBSTANCE ABUSE INTERVENTION

INTRODUCTION

It is important for you to learn about the effects of drug use, the reasons why drugs are harmful, and ways to resist pressures to try drugs. However, imbedded within the principles of good citizenship, JROTC cadets take this one step further. They also learn about the dangers posed by drugs in order to help other students avoid them, thus persuading those using drugs to seek help. Involvement in intervention programs can only help to dissolve the drug problem.

TELL-TALE SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE

As a cadet and leader in the JROTC program, you serve as a role model for other cadets. You send a positive message to your followers about how to successfully function without drugs. You can also help by recognizing signs of problems in other cadets. The following list of symptoms and signs of drug use will help you to determine if someone you know may be using drugs or has a serious drug problem.

- Changes in attendance, discipline, interests, neatness, and attention
- Loss of interest in sports, extracurricular activities, or hobbies
- Failing memory
- Unusual degree of activity, like excitement, boundless energy, excessive laughter, and excessive talkativeness
- Unusual inactivity, like moodiness, depression, drowsiness
- Poor physical coordination
- Slurred speech
- Deterioration of physical appearance and lack of concern for health habits and dress

- Loss of appetite and rapid weight loss
- Sudden increase in appetite
- Unpredictable outbreaks of temper and arguing
- Nervousness and irritability
- Reduced motivation, self-discipline, and self-esteem
- Wearing sunglasses at inappropriate times to conceal the eyes which may be red or have constricted or dilated pupils
- Constantly wearing long-sleeved shirts or blouses (to hide needle marks)
- Borrowing frequently from others or stealing money (required to purchase drugs)
- Chronic dishonesty, such as lying, stealing, or cheating
- Appearing frequently in out-of-the way areas, such as closets, storage areas, or rest rooms
- Guilty behavior and fear of discovery
- Association with known or possible drug sellers or abusers
- Not giving straight answers when questioned about activities
- Appearance of intoxication but no smell of alcohol, indicating possible use of barbiturates or marijuana
- Use of drug-related vocabulary
- Possession of pipes, rolling papers, small decongestant bottles, and lighters
- Possession of drugs or evidence of drugs, such as peculiar plants, butts, seeds or leaves in ashtrays, or clothing pockets
- Odor of drugs and the smell of incense or other “cover-up” scents

Remember these are just guidelines of which you should be aware. Many of these behaviors or signs can have causes other than drug use. However, if you notice some of these signs in someone, you can be fairly certain that there is some kind of problem; whether related to drugs or not, the person needs help. You can be a part of that help.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL? WHERE DO YOU FIND HELP?

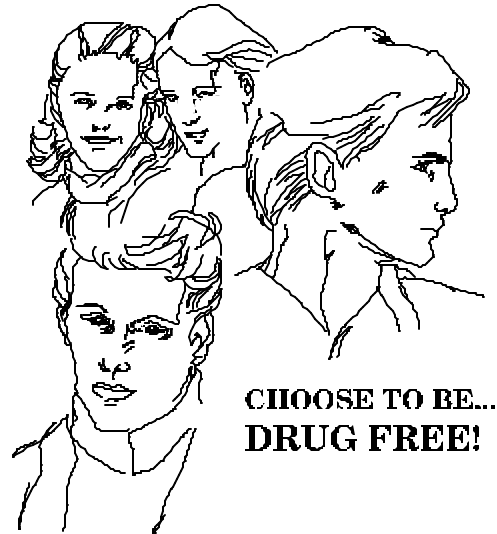
If a friend you know is having problems and is considering abusing drugs to relieve the pain, you can be of help just by being there to listen and by affirming your personal decision that drugs are not a good way to deal with problems. In some cases, this may be all that is needed — a caring and strong presence can go a long way as can an informed discussion about what a particular drug can do to the mind and body. There may be other situations, though, which require specific and professional help that you are not prepared to give.

When you realize that someone you know may have a drug problem, there are some choices of action you need to make. Among your choices are:

1. *Convince the person to seek help.* Be prepared with the names of people and agencies that can provide help.
2. *Tell a responsible adult, such as an instructor or counselor, that you are concerned about the person.* You may be reluctant to do this because it feels like telling on someone. However, especially in cases where you know the person is using life-threatening drugs or participating in dangerous situations, you are really doing this person a favor. Your action may save a life.
3. *If you know of someone selling drugs, report the person to an appropriate authority.* People who sell drugs have passed the point of having a personal problem. Drug dealers are hurting others.

Find out what types of help are available at your school and in your community for people with problems. Know the proper procedure for reporting drug-related incidents, and above all,

show the cadets whom you lead that you care about their well-being and are willing to help. Your example and your support can have a positive impact on those around you.



CONCLUSION

Become involved as an individual. Talk to your friends and neighbors about drugs. Ask them to join you in your community's attack on drugs. Reach out a helping hand to your community — join the fight against drugs and become a part of the solution. Your assistance could save a life.